



News Release

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, April 4, 2007
Contact:
Kalynn Filion
UDOH Cancer Program
801-538-7009
Cyndi Bemis
UDOH PIO Office
801-538-6348

UTAH PHILANTHROPIST JON HUNTSMAN, SR. DONATES \$1 MILLION FOR CERVICAL CANCER PREVENTION

SALT LAKE CITY – Many Utah women will receive life-saving education and vaccines to prevent the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), the leading cause of cervical cancer. Industrialist Jon Huntsman, Sr. has donated \$1 million to the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) to begin an awareness campaign and provide low-cost vaccines to eligible women. HPV is a sexually transmitted disease that causes genital warts and up to 70 percent of all cervical cancers.

In a letter to UDOH Executive Director Dr. David N. Sundwall, Huntsman wrote, “My quest in life and my pledge in death . . . is to assist in the eradication of cancer in all its ugly mannerisms, irrespective of cause.”

In June 2006, the FDA approved an HPV vaccine that is effective against four strains of the virus for use among females ages 9-26. “The vaccine is a huge step forward in eliminating cervical cancer and saving women’s lives,” said Dr. Sundwall. “Mr. Huntsman’s generous donation will allow us to get the word out about this troublesome infection, teach women how to prevent it, and provide vaccines,” he added.

Huntsman says he was prompted to make the donation after a bill crafted by Representative Karen Morgan that would have provided the funds failed in the 2007 legislative session. “Although Representative Morgan, co-sponsor Rep. Sylvia Anderson and others worked tirelessly, the measure was defeated,” said Huntsman. “We were proud of Representative Morgan’s perseverance as she went back to her fellow lawmakers with a scaled-down proposal for a \$25,000 public awareness campaign, which was successful,” he said.

-MORE-

Page 2 of 2 - Jon Huntsman, Sr. Donates \$1 Million for Cervical Cancer Prevention

HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the U.S. It is estimated that at least 50% of sexually active people will get HPV at some time in their lives. Although the majority of these infections cause no symptoms, persistent genital HPV infection can cause cervical cancer in women and other types of anal and genital cancers and genital warts in both men and women.

The incidence of invasive cervical cancer in the United States has decreased significantly over the last 40 years because of widespread use of Pap testing, which can detect lesions on the cervix before they become cancer. The HPV vaccine will not eliminate the need for screening because it does not protect women from all types of HPV that cause cancer. On average, 60 Utah women are diagnosed and 17 die each year from cervical cancer.

“We hope that, through increased awareness about HPV and access to the vaccine, potential cases of cervical cancer may be prevented and the lives of sisters and daughters, wives and mothers throughout Utah may be saved,” stated Mr. Huntsman.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends HPV vaccination among females 9 to 26 years of age to prevent cervical cancer caused by HPV, but adds that abstaining from sexual activity is the surest way to prevent HPV infection. For those who choose to be sexually active, a monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner is the most likely to prevent future genital HPV infection. In addition, the CDC recommends that women and girls receive regular cervical cancer screening (Pap tests) starting within three years of when a woman begins sexual activity or at age 21, whichever comes first.

For more information, contact visit www.ucan.cc or call 1-888-222-2542

#

The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death; assuring access to affordable, quality health care; and promoting healthy lifestyles.